health, safety
MONITORING & LOCATORS

a high-tech way to age in place

story by MARK KOOPMANS

Home monitoring enhances seniors' independence and caregivers' peace of mind.

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According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 77 million boomers reside in the U.S. and by 2030, this demographic will represent an estimated 20 percent of the population. This means each day for the next 19 years, more than 10,000 baby boomers will turn 65. Studies show the vast majority of seniors wish to remain in their homes as they age, and about 85 percent of those "aging in place" will require some sort of in-home care from family, friends or home health services. Fortunately, numerous companies are working to make staying connected with seniors easier with a variety of home monitoring systems.

Several companies are investing significant research and development funds with the goal of creating affordable technology that will revolutionize how people age in their homes. Much of this new technology involves wireless devices that communicate with a main touch screen monitor. The components have been specifically designed with seniors in mind, with large text and simple navigation. Installation is in most cases no more complex than setting up a desktop computer. A half-hour training session with the dealer representative is usually sufficient, and maintenance is minimal.

Many of these systems come with health monitoring equipment like a weight scale, pulse oximeter, glucometer and blood pressure cuff. Each accessory is designed to work with the main unit to read and record health data, which can be stored for access by client-approved family and medical professionals through a web browser, or sent to contacts of the client's choosing. Some systems also incorporate wireless sensors throughout the home to monitor movement, temperature and lighting.

What's more, these systems often offer entertainment options and photo and video sharing functions, which not only allow families to monitor the health and well-being of their loved ones, but can also enrich their relationships.

Another plus is that the technology is very cost effective when compared with the expense of a long-term care facility. The average monthly cost for an independent living center is about $3,500 to $5,000, while the average cost of a home monitoring system is generally about $1,000 down and $200 per month. A family can save more than $40,000 the first year alone by choosing home monitoring.

The bottom line when it comes to advances in home monitoring: It's a win-win for everybody involved in a senior's life. The senior gets to continue to live independently, and their caregivers get peace of mind, all in an easy-to-use, affordable package.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Mark Koopmans is the chief technology officer and co-founder of Added Care Systems. Koopmans has placed an emphasis in his career on understanding and implementing better ways for users to interact with applications and communication mediums. For more information, visit www.addedcareservices.com.

All HCPCS codes subject to change.

monitoring PRODUCTS

ADDED CARE ASSISTANT

Added Care Assistant is an interactive aging-in-place appliance. The user interface consists of a touch screen KIOSK-type computer, which has no keyboard or mouse—all user functions are accessible through an interface, which features large buttons utilizing both icons and text. Added Care Services' proprietary software allows the ACA to wirelessly attach to and communicate with wellness devices such as blood pressure monitors, scales, glucose monitors and pulse oximeters, and home automation devices such as motion sensors, pressure mats, light controllers and temperature sensors. The ACA also allows family members and loved ones to give the user access to family videos on YouTube, and family pictures and albums on Google's Picassa web albums.

Added Care Services, 888-499-1129, www.addedcareservices.com

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ALERT SENTRY ENHANCED PENDANT & MOBILE 911

Developed jointly by telecommunications and health care professionals, the Alert Sentry System package consists of equipment that is ready to use and works with an existing telephone line. The recently introduced Enhanced Pendant enables clients to speak directly through the pendant to Alert Sentry's call center. This allows the call center to assess the situation and dispatch the proper assistance. Alert Sentry also now offers Mobile 911, a simple cell phone that is designed for emergencies only. Alert Sentry is waiving the authorized dealer fees for MedTrade Fall 2011 attendees. Visit booth 1952 during the show.

Alert Sentry Systems, 877-253-7899, www.alertsentry.com

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SILVERPLUS SILVERCARE PERSONAL SAFETY ALERT DEVICE

SilverCare allows users to manage their health and safety around the house without monthly payments or service contracts. Alert Aids include two-way communication via the watch or pendant; priority help calling, which allows the user to talk with a loved one or neighbor during an emergency; and dedicated 911. Fall Prevention Aids include remote call-answering, which allows users to answer the phone with the watch or pendant and talk directly through the base console, and SilverLite,an optional accessory which lets the user to turn lights on and off wirelessly. Safety and Well-Being Aids include medication and appointment reminders; programmable ICE (In Case of Emergency) information; and Home and Away notification.

SilverPlus, 877-745-8701, www.gosilverplus.com

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LOGICMARK FREEDOMALERT PERSONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

LogicMark FreedomAlert provides two-way voice communication through the pendant, from anywhere in and around the home. FreedomAlert also calls up to four numbers of your choice—family, friends, even 911 if no one answers from your list of contacts. Because you are calling family members or 911, there are no monthly fees. The Emergency Wall Communicator is like PERS on steroids. This is the first wireless and battery powered two-way voice communicator for a Personal Emergency Response System (PERS). Simply attach the Emergency Wall Communicator to the wall anywhere in your home and you have full way voice communication to the central station of your choice. The waterproof unit can even be located in the shower, where many accidents happen.

LogicMark, 800-519-2419, www.logicmark.com

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GRANDCARE SYSTEMS

The GrandCare System is connected to any dedicated Internet connection and communicates with "wireless" sensors throughout the residence. Designated caregivers can log into the GrandCare website to send communications to their loved one, view activity and tele-wellness sensor information and customize the automatic caregiver alerts. A caregiver may choose to receive a call, e-mail or text message if specified conditions occur (medication noncompliance, unusual activity, door opens at unusual time, etc). GrandCare also incorporates socialization, entertainment and communication elements. Family can send pictures, messages, e-mails, reminders, calendar appointments, voice messages, family videos, music and more to the GrandCare System. The loved one may also play games, engage in brain benders, listen to music, watch old film clips, view news and weather reports and more.

GrandCare Systems LLC, 262-338-6147, www.grandcare.com

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SMART CAREGIVER CORDLESS® FALL/MOBILITY MONITORING SYSTEM

Smart Caregiver's patented CordLess Fall/Mobility Monitoring System helps to keep residents safe with pressure-sensing chair pads, bed pads and floor mats that signal a CordLess Monitor, Central Monitor or Pager, alerting caregivers that someone in their care may need assistance. Unique among fall monitoring products, Smart's CordLess System uses wireless technology to eliminate cords between the sensors and the monitors. Eliminating the cord allows caregivers to reduce bedside alarm noise because the mobility monitor may be placed outside of the resident's room where caregivers can see and hear it better. And with CordLess, the tripping and entanglement hazards presented by conventional cords are eliminated.

Smart Caregiver Corporation, 800-650-3637, www.smartcaregivercorp.com

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www.handicareusa.com

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RF TECHNOLOGIES CODE ALERT® QUICK RESPONSE® PLUS WITH SMART ID™

RF Technologies, a leading provider of radio frequency identification monitoring systems and healthcare security solutions, announces new Smart ID location detection technology. The Code Alert Quick Response Plus with Smart ID is an economical solution that identifies a resident's location upon their call, with detail down to a common or general living area. This enables caregivers to respond to calls faster and provides a greater sense of security for the residents of a community and their families. The system is also faster and easier to install than other systems that require extensive mapping of a facility. The Quick Response Plus solution features call pendants, which are available as a necklace, belt clip or wristband; easy-to-use touch screen monitor software, Quick Look™ LED displays, smoke detector integration and reporting capabilities.

RF Technologies, 800-669-9946 x3, www.rft.com

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ABLENET RESPONSABLE™ PERSONAL ALERT SYSTEM

This innovative product works with an existing phone line, allowing users to program up to four phone numbers to call with a single push of a button. A loved one or patient simply wears a pendant to provide instant access to help whenever it's needed. Unlike with simple alert systems, use the pendant to automatically dial the preset numbers, and then talk with the person on the other end. If no one answers, 911 can be automatically dialed. Responsable is great for making people feel comfortable that help is always available, even if it is not a "911 emergency." This unit includes one pendant and a base station that connects to a standard telephone. Also available: Wall Mount Unit, Additional Pendants and Switch Accessible Wall Mount Unit.

HCPCS: A9280

AbleNet, 800-322-0956, www.ablenetinc.com

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SIMPLYHOME SYSTEM

The SimplyHome System is a sophisticated in-home monitoring system to track and manage various items and events within a home. Various discrete technologies from medication access tracking to a stove sensor work together to help notify family members and caregivers of potential issues based on choices and activities within the home. Additionally, every event that happens in the home is tracked on your own secure website. Using the reporting tools in the website, you can quickly identify changing behaviors or trends. Finally, you can incorporate the EMT Call Center with the system to help respond to any need. The EMTs are available to respond to a missed medication access, an in-home emergency and every need in between.

SimplyHome, 877-684-3581, www.simply-home.com

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DIRECT LINK PERSONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM

The Direct Link Personal Emergency Response System is monitored 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For help, simply press the small, wireless button worn as a pendant or wristband. The Care Center staff will respond promptly and take action based on your prior instructions, such as dispatch an ambulance; have a neighbor check in on you or notify a family member of your situation. Operators will then call to confirm help arrived. For added security, Direct Link includes an extra emergency call button free of charge. All call buttons are water-resistant, making them ideal for all rooms—even kitchens and bathrooms. Direct Link PERS units are compatible with digital cable/VoIP phone service and AC operated with a rechargeable battery back-up for travel or power failures.

HCPCS: S5160—Emergency response installation and testing; **S5161**—service fee, per month, excludes installation and testing

Direct Link, 800-216-4196, www.directlink911.com

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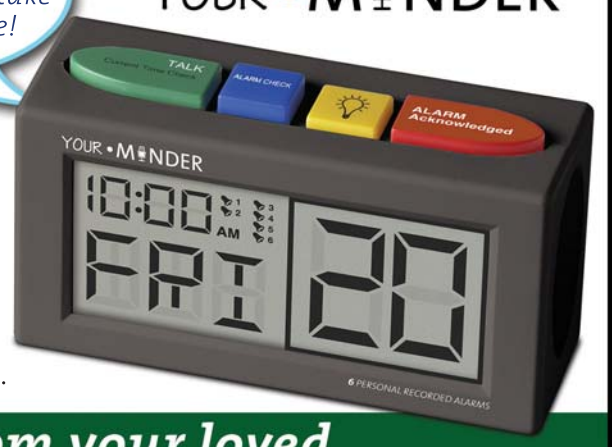
Hey, Dad! It's ten o'clock! Don't forget to take your Medicine!

RECORDING YOUR • MINDER



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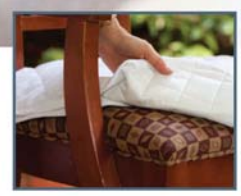
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